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February 27, 2009

Michael Galluzzo, Principal
To Whom it May Concern:

25 Wolf Pit Road, Farmington, CT 06032 (860) 674-9519

I am a school social worker in the Farmington Public School system. I am writing in support of the Sheff Movement. As a school social worker for the past twelve years, I have been intimately involved with the CHOICE students and families. Given my relationship with the CHOICE program through CREC, I believe that the CHOICE program should remain as part of the Capital Region Education Council. I do not support the transfer of the CHOICE program into the Department of Education for the following reasons:

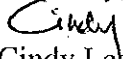
I have serviced students from the CHOICE program for the past twelve years. Over the years, I have worked closely with the CHOICE intervention specialists and program director Nessa Oram. The students who are bussed from Hartford have everything to gain from the education offered in the suburban towns. In the hopes that the students who participate in the CHOICE program receive the most optimum education, the program must remain within CREC as it is managed and supervised by personnel who understand the unique and individual needs of each student. The complexities of leaving Hartford and integrating into a much wealthier and often more challenging academic arena requires that the students and parents have the proper support in place. The CHOICE initiative meets those needs mainly because the support staff continues to collaborate and manage each child on an individual basis.

A transfer of the CHOICE program into the State Department of Education would only sacrifice the learning needs and experiences of each student. The transfer of the CHOICE program would depersonalize the experience of each individual student. Sadly, the CHOICE students who rely on support and outreach would lack the understanding of their needs if the CHOICE program is transferred to the State Department of Education.

Please acknowledge this letter as testimony in support of maintaining the CHOICE program as part of CREC.

Thank you,

Sincerely,


Cindy Leach, LCSW
School Social Worker